

American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, April 25, 2014

Present: A. Al-Kutoubi, T. Amin, I., S. Arnaout, J. Chaaban, S. Chahine, N. Dajani, A. Dallal, H. Diab, Z. Dawy, J. DeJong, P. Dorman (chairing), I. Elhadj, J. Ghafari, S. Hout, S. Jabbour-Khoury, D. Jamali, A. Kayssi, V. Khamis, H. Khoury, G. Matar, P. May, P. McGreevy, L. Nasreddine, S. Nouredine, M. Salameh, I. Saoud, M. Sayegh, E. Shammas, M. Suidan, S. Talhouk (representing N. Hwalla), J. Usta, A. Zenger.

Absent: A. Al-Hroub, E. Baydoun, R. Brow, N. Farajalla, H. Huijjer*, N. Hwalla*, D. Jaalouk, D. Jamali*, T. Nizameddin, I. Nuwayhid, S. Saleh, D. Wrisley, S. Zeineldine.

(*= regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 pm.

1. Approval of minutes

Minutes of the meeting of March 28, 2014 were approved with suggested amendments.

2. Report of the chair on previous action items

The President briefed the Senate on follow-up on previous Senate motions. All had been acted on but resolution was pending for the following issues: the capstone course recommendation had been referred to the Academic Development Committee; action is ongoing regarding language of contract documents referring to unilateral changes; the issue of faculty representation on committees is being looked at and would be discussed today in relation to reorganization of the Employee Benefit Committee. Three motions are pending BoT approval May 2014, as follows: the Clinical Psychology faculty position; amendment of FAS by-laws to change composition of FAS Advisory Committee; revised procedures for run-off elections. The revised academic titles were approved; the motion concerning the budget and tuition costs is being addressed in the budget discussions. Regarding past action items, the 2009 motion regarding concerning maternity coverage was never implemented and the President has instructed HR to follow up. Concerning long-term disability coverage, Interim COO Diab is investigating the issue. The President stated that he had reviewed the previous 3 years of Senate minutes and is ready to review 5 years to ensure all motions have been acted on. In discussion, a senator asked about the Senate motion to freeze tuition, the report of the commission on tuition increases, and whether there would be a deadline for implementation of motions on maternity coverage and disability since they affect livelihoods. The President responded that there would be an update on maternity coverage at the next meeting, but that since the motion on disability coverage has financial implications it needs to be passed by the BoT. Regarding tuition costs, he is discussing it with the Chair of the BoT Finance Committee. Concerning the report of the commission it would be sent out that afternoon. Another senator raised the need to consider the companion policies to support the new privacy policy and for it to be added to action items. The Provost stated that this needs to await the hiring of a new CIO since it requires an overall view of IT. Another question was raised concerning ownership of the long-term disability issue. The

President responded that information is obtained from HR but the decision-making rests with Interim COO Diab.

3. Proposals from the Academic Development Committee (FAFS)

a) Merging of the AVSC and AGSC departments to a Department of Agriculture

Z. Dawy on behalf of the Academic Development Committee, presented a motion (that was seconded) to merge these two departments and introduced S. Talhouk, Associate Dean FAFS. She presented the history of the restructuring at FAFS following FAFS's 2006 strategy that aimed to align departments such that each department houses at least one undergraduate program. The first restructuring took place in 2007 and the second in 2014. She explained that the new FAFS strategy (2012 – 2017) called for developing a higher level Veterinary Science program with the Faculty of Medicine. Since a BS in this field does not entitle graduates to work, the undergraduate program was closed. The merger of the departments would mean that the two departments would be dissolved, and instead of two chairs there would be one chair and faculty members would be combined into one department. FAFS would therefore have three departments: Agriculture; Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management; and Nutrition and Food Sciences. Each would offer at least one undergraduate degree. In response to questions about the plans for a doctoral program, S. Talhouk clarified that this would be an inter-faculty program between FAFS and FM. **Vote 2014-38: The motion to merge the AVSC and AGSC departments to a Department of Agriculture was approved.**

b) Curricular changes to the BSc in Nutrition and Dietetics and Coordinated Program in Nutrition and Dietetics

Z. Dawy on behalf of the Academic Development Committee made **a motion (that was seconded) to approve the proposed curricular changes** and introduced L. Nasreddine, coordinator of the nutrition undergraduate program. Following accreditation by the US accreditation body for Nutrition and Dietetics, there was recognition of the need to align the curriculum with accreditation standards. Specifically, the Nutrition and Dietetics (ND) program's total credits were increased from 96 to 97 allowing the introduction of a course on nutrients in food and menu planning. Because of the need for graduates to have counselling skills, the required Sociology course was replaced by a Psychology course. Another course was divided into two courses. For the Nutrition and Dietetics Coordinated Program (NDCP), the number of credits was increased from 129 to 133, the same replacement of a Sociology course by a Psychology course was made and there was an addition of a course on nutrients in food/menu planning as well as two other new courses. Some modifications were made to existing courses and, in the junior/senior years, students will gain exposure to practicing dietitians. Permission was requested to institutionalize these changes. In discussion, concern was expressed by Dean McGreevy and another senator about the lack of coordination with FAS; an additional 50 students for a Psychology course, given already high demand, would be onerous. A suggestion was made that other faculties should pay for lines in faculties when courses are needed there, such as was done by FEA in Chemistry. P. McGreevy stressed that this is something the university needs to address. In response to a question, L. Nasreddine confirmed that the remaining 4 credits could be accommodated within the existing time period of the program. Regarding whether these changes needed Ministry of Education approval, H. Diab confirmed that this would fall in the category of minor changes and therefore the Director-General merely needs to be informed. **Vote 2014-39: The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

4. Proposal from the Board of Graduate Studies for new degrees in Biomedical Engineering

Z Dawy, as chair of the committee for these joint proposals for Master's in Engineering (ME) and PhD degrees in Biomedical engineering, respectively, presented their rationale. **A motion was made (and seconded) on behalf of the Board of Graduate Studies to approve the proposals.** Work had started on the proposal in 2012 when Deans Suidan and Sayegh appointed a task force. No similar PhD program and few master's programs exist in Lebanon or the region and the differentiating factor for these degrees is combining the strengths of both FM and FEA. Demand in the field is likely to grow globally and locally. FEA opened two faculty positions related to Biomedical Engineering during 2012-13 and 30 applications were received. More than 20% of FEA faculty members have research interests related to Biomedical Engineering. The ME program of 30 credits would have thesis and non-thesis options (with the latter taking 6 credits of skills-based electives). The programs would be housed in FEA but governed by a Joint Coordinating Committee of the 6 faculty members, 3 each from FEA/FM. Degrees would be signed by Deans of both faculties. Expected student enrolment is 2 new students for the doctoral program and 5 for the Master's, eventually reaching a steady state of 20 graduates by year 6. Dean Suidan acknowledged Prof. Dawy's leadership. Questions raised concerned the balance of science vs engineering courses, the source of numbers given for financial estimates, and the statement that the programs would break even after 3 years. Z. Dawy replied that the programs would be attractive to science students but they would need to take more engineering courses. Regarding the figures, these are standard as provided by BoGS. **Vote 2014-40: The vote on the motion to approve the master's program was 25 in favor with 1 abstention. Vote 2014-41: The vote in favor of approving the doctoral program was 25 in favor and one abstention.**

5. Request for a meeting of the Senate with the Board of Trustees

A. Kayssi, as nominated Senate representative to the BoT, requested that, given issues facing the university, the full Senate meet with the BoT. President Dorman stated that he had requested such a meeting but he was not yet sure if it would be with the full Board, but that the time-slot would be confirmed.

6. Proposed change to the policy on "graduation with distinction" for transfer students

M. Salameh explained that under the current policy for awarding distinction and high distinction, transfer students are excluded. Both for fairness and to motivate high achievers, he **proposed a motion to revise the policy with the following text (as in attachment) to be added: "For transfer students, if the number of credits completed at AUB is less than 60, then the completed credits are used in the measuring criteria."** One senator raised a concern, echoed by others, that judging transfer students' performance on the basis of 3 semesters but non-transfer students' performance over 4 semesters is unfair, especially given that the earlier courses are more difficult. The Provost stated that since AUB allows transfer students to graduate with 45 credits completed at AUB, their achievement in that period should be recognized. Another senator made a distinction between granting graduation and granting distinction, and another suggested consulting with students on the issue. The decision was important given that it can have implications for students' prospects after graduation. **Vote 2014-42: A vote to table the motion passed with 17 voting in favor, 6 opposed and 1 abstention.**

7. Proposed change to Employee Benefits Committee structure and bylaws

J. Chaaban stated that since lack of faculty representation is at the core of the problems facing the university, he had drafted a policy for a revamped Employee Benefits Committee. It currently includes 2 faculty members appointed by the President but he could not find by-laws of the committee. Some key benefits – such as housing and HIP -- do not come under its purview. One senator said he approved the proposal but that its meeting should not be open to any faculty member attending. Acting COO Diab stated that he was not against the proposal but it needs time for consideration and that any changes would need to be approved by the BoT. Dean Sayegh raised a procedural question of how the by-laws of committees are changed and whether it needs approval of the committee members. President Dorman clarified that this committee was initially created by the BoT to deal with pensions, and that normally committee members draft by-laws. He agreed with many elements of the proposal and the idea of centralizing faculty benefits, but stated that changes would need to go to the BoT to expand the mandate of the committee. In follow-up discussion, J. Chaaban insisted that faculty representatives should be elected, not appointed. He also noted that there was an HIP report but the by-laws do not mention an HIP committee. VP Sayegh stated he was not aware of an HIP committee, but he had formed a Task Force combined of HR and FM as well as faculty and Syndicate representatives. He suggested Dr. G. Hamadeh (chair) could give a report to the Senate on its work. It had recommended to hire an external consultant to analyze financing of HIP. A senator raised concern about the lack of follow-up on policies and the need for training of staff on policies and procedures. President Dorman concurred, and stressed that more should be done to ensure staff understand and implement all policies. COO Diab reiterated that the proposal needs more time, particularly given that he is currently studying policies under the responsibility of the COO. A senator made a **motion to refer the proposal to the SCFA, that was amended by Acting COO Diab, to have the Employee Benefits Committee consider the proposal before it was referred to the SCFA.** Another senator asked that it be reported on in the next Senate meeting. President Dorman stated that there was no need to vote on the issue, and thanked J. Chaaban for the groundwork.

8. Other business

The President stated that an additional Senate meeting would be scheduled for May 23.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

Minutes recorded by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate